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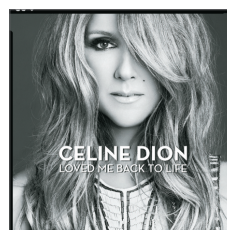
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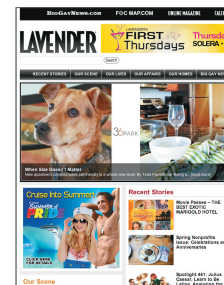
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Volume 19, Issue 481 • October 31-November 13, 2013

### Editorial

**Managing Editor** Andy Lien 612-436-4671  
**Editorial Assistants** Linda Raines 612-436-4694, Shane Lueck  
**Editor Emeritus** Ethan Boatner 612-436-4670  
**Editorial Associate** George Holdgrafer 612-436-4672  
**Copy Editor** Bridget Rocheford-Kearney  
**Contributors** Ed Huyck, Justin Jones, Ellen Krug, Steve Lenius, Jennifer Parelo, Joy Summers, John Townsend, Carla Waldemar, Randy Stern, Shane Lueck, Kathleen Watson, Brett Stevens

### Advertising

**Sales & Advertising Director** Barry Leavitt 612-436-4690  
**Senior Account Executive** Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699  
**Account Executives** Richard Kranz 612-436-4675, Morgan Ross 612-436-4697  
**Advertising Associate** George Holdgrafer 612-436-4672  
**Sales & Advertising Traffic Coordinator** Linda Raines 612-436-4694  
**Sales Appointments** Michelle Ulmer 612-436-4693  
**Classifieds** Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699  
**National Sales Representative** Rivendell Media 212-242-6863

### Creative

**Creative Director** Hubert Bonnet 612-436-4678  
**Multimedia Designer** Mike Hnida 612-436-4679  
**Photographer** Sophia Hantzes  
**Lavender Studios** Hubert Bonnet, Mike Hnida, Austin Lindstrom

### Administration

**Publisher** Lavender Media, Inc.  
**President & CEO** Stephen Rocheford 612-436-4665  
**Vice President & CC** Pierre Tardif 612-436-4666  
**Chief Financial Officer** Carolyn Lima 612-436-4664  
**Administrative Assistant** Austin Lindstrom 612-436-4661  
**Founders** George Holdgrafer, Stephen Rocheford  
**Inspiration** Steven W. Anderson (1954-1994), Timothy J. Lee (1968-2002), Russell Berg (1957-2005), Kathryn Rocheford (1914-2006), Jonathan Halverson (1974-2010), Adam Houghtaling (1984-2012), Walker Pearce (1946-2013)

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### Lavender Media, Inc.

3715 Chicago Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55407  
[LavenderYellowPages.com](http://LavenderYellowPages.com)  
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## At Last

At last.

At last, the people of Minnesota can marry the loves of their lives, gay or straight. Whether sung by Billie Holliday or written on the cover of this magazine, the sentiment is an acknowledgement to an end of an era and the beginning of a new one. For this community regarding this issue of marriage equality, all of the metaphorical “lonely nights” are over in Minnesota’s history, “...and life is like a song.”

Sure, in each of our lives, life might not be so song-worthy; plenty of us are looking for our loves, some of us are leaving our loves, and some of us have no interest in love...but at least there is the legal option for recognizing love.

In these pages, you’ll find people who are, at last, married. For the first time, or the second. Is it remarrying to get married a second time? Supermarried? Legally married? Civilly married? So many different terms to cover relationships that had to improvise and come up with their own versions of commitment. At last, there is one term and one frame of reference for all who want those rights and that recognition for their commitments. At long last.

At last we have a Wedding Issue that history has caught up with; after three previous comprehensive Wedding Issues, this is the first to be just as legitimate as same-sex marriage in Minnesota. We’re celebrating three months of marriage, since August 1, and Minnesotans are living proof that same-sex marriage doesn’t lead to the downfall of humanity. Since Minnesotans started marrying, New Jersey has joined the ranks of giving rights to same-sex couples who wish to wed and Oregon has declared that its citizens’ federal rights will be upheld if they were married in a state that allows same-sex marriage (even though Oregon hasn’t legalized it, yet). The Supreme Court of the United States’ decisions to give Californians back the freedom to marry and to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act’s Section 3 are making many people reconsider both their official and personal positions on same-sex marriage. The tide is turning, but in bits and pieces.

I was in Philadelphia a few weeks ago for Outfest with other members of the media that feature the rainbow community. Being able to talk to peers who are not only in my industry, but also in my niche, was priceless. Each publication represented was from a different region of the United States; but only two of us out of five are from states that have marriage equality and nondiscrimination laws for employment. Some of the states are looking toward having a ballot vote involving marriage equality sooner or later, others might be looking to legislators to do like Minnesota did. Perhaps a few might have some courts who are hearing cases about same-sex marriage. I took a step back and noticed that my talks with them about Minnesota’s fight for marriage equality were in the past tense. It’s been a matter of

months, but I sounded like a seasoned veteran of marriage equality. A seasoned veteran of three months.

I’ve noticed that I slip into that “life is wonderful, we’re awesome” way of referring to the freedom to marry, too, when I talk to friends and family from states that have yet to recognize and implement equal rights for the GLBT community. I’ll be talking to a friend in Wisconsin as if they’ve got the same rights that we do in Minnesota just to be gently reminded that, “Andy, we don’t have marriage here.” With those words, the wind is sucked from my sails and I see again just how much work is left to be done.

Walking around Philly’s Outfest that Sunday afternoon, I revealed in the fact that Philadelphia has its own officially named “Gayborhood.” Blocks and blocks of the City of Brotherly Love are given this credibility and notoriety. In addition to this geographic area and concentration of bars, eateries, and community resources, there’s a historic marker near Independence Hall indicating that significant gay rights demonstrations began in Philly and predated the Stonewall activities in New York City. Philadelphia is steeped in freedom and rights, both old and new. You could feel it in the cobblestone.

And then I realized that I hadn’t seen one indication that the GLBT community in Pennsylvania was doing anything about marriage equality. Coming from Minnesota and a couple of years of active campaigning against the marriage amendment and for marriage equality, I had to do a double-take. At our events, we couldn’t help but see something about marriage every way we turned. If you dropped a person into Loring Park during Pride (or any of the other Pride celebrations across the state), that person would know exactly what was happening in terms of marriage equality in a matter of ten minutes time.

Not in Philly. I saw no organized marriage equality effort at Outfest. I was shocked. I did not feel hope, I did not feel like “life is wonderful, we’re awesome.” I did not feel like the community was equal with the straight community, despite the Gayborhood and freedom fighters of yore.

Not to draw too judgmental of a conclusion, but Minnesota has marriage equality and Pennsylvania does not. We know how much time, money, talking, signage, and effort it took to achieve marriage equality. How will it happen across the country?

Perhaps we should sit down and have a couple conversations with the folks in Philly.

Congratulations, everyone. Revel in our own history here in Minnesota. We may not have cobblestones, but we have conversations. And they build and build.

With gratitude and love,  
Andy □





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## Where There Is Love, There Is Life

Since August, I've been vicariously enjoying, via e-mail and Facebook, the burgeoning same-sex marriages around the Twin Cities. Saturday, October 12, I was honored to attend the nuptials of two dear friends.

They've been together over twenty years, through good times and the difficult, and are moms of twins just on the cusp of 'tween. The kids were in from the engagement—designing and illustrating the invitations, choosing the flavor and frosting on the cake, standing up as ring bearer and bridesmaid at the ceremony.

It was a home event, with some forty friends, families and children in attendance. After signing the necessary documents, the rabbi invited the guests to draw near. Using a doorway arch as a canopy, he delivered a short, heartfelt service, and after the traditional smashing of the wine glass underfoot, pronounced the couple legally married in the state of Minnesota. He added that after more than twenty years together, creating home and family, the ceremony simply reinforced a union that already existed.

Watching, eyes moist, it was difficult for me to realize that not everyone will acknowledge the love my friends shared that evening.

But they are legion.

Apostle Dallin H. Oaks, addressing the biannual general conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stated that while states and nations may legalize same-sex marriage, human laws "cannot make moral what God has declared immoral."

Oaks, a former Utah Supreme Court justice, allowed that "the faith's stance against same-sex marriage might be misunderstood or prompt accusations of bigotry," yet he nevertheless proclaimed, "And unlike other organizations that can change their policies and even their doctrines, our policies are determined by the truths God has declared to be unchangeable." Not to single out the LDS church—it is not unique. Despite the evidence that we are but talking dots on a tiny blue marble whirling in the cosmos, many faiths insist that they alone know the mind of the Infinite.

Meanwhile, my friends' kids and the other youngsters that danced together into the evening are entering a different world. A world where love abounds, where "unchangeable" is not used to stifle lives. Intuitively, they are busy learning to live by Ghandi's words: "Where there is love there is life." ■

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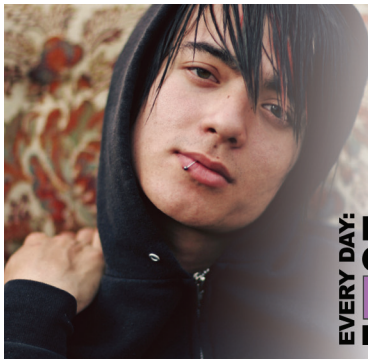


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## Eclipsed by Equality

Prior to marriage equality in Minnesota I was truly as married to my wife as I could be in Minnesota. Having had a wedding in July 2011, legally making our last name the same, and saying “wife” and “married” made real my marriage. I was married, even to those who didn’t care, didn’t have a clue, or who would soon fight vehemently against my right to legally marry.

When marriage equality arrived in Minnesota in May of 2013 it brought a strangely omniscient narrative with it. As more folks became more comfortable talking about same-sex marriage, which I was often a stranger’s only reference point for, I saw my marriage disappear in their eyes as if it was something That Didn’t Exist Yet. August 1st became like a collective-conscience gay marriage Kickstarter deadline. If we hit it with enough support we’d all exist. I became intermittently infuriated and elated throughout summer.

I realized soon after marrying how the words I used regarding my marriage had so much power that I said them almost with duty. Not saying them became an offense to my marriage and to the future of marriage equality. At a certain point I realized that on almost all occasions where I veered toward disuse of the word “wife” it was to be received by a person who had no clue if I could get married to a woman. I became a reference point for that person’s experience with gay marriage and it then existed for them regardless of legal standing. It was happening.

I rarely got asked if my marriage was legal because those who were in the know knew like we did that it didn’t matter if it was legal in some other state in 2011 or 2012 because we lived on Minnesota soil where it wasn’t recognized. And those who were not in the know didn’t know. It was liberating because we lived with words and acts making marriage real, not laws, and every time the words were used and the acts revisited we created same-sex marriage. Legal or not. And then Marriage Equality happened in Minnesota, showing up in town like some old friend moving to your new school, and telling everyone how you used to be (good or bad). Minnesotans became engaged on the subject and knew what I did or didn’t have a right to. I no longer dictated the realness of my marriage through my words

and the words I gave to others to use to refer to/discuss it. Strangers boldly asked questions about where I got married to discern if it was legal or not. They followed up my response of “in Minnesota,” with, “so are you going to get married again?” The questions were in earnest and I loved the discourse at first and have always been comfortable answering questions for people who want to know about gay marriage. It was kind of glorious to have these conversations with a groom’s dad’s friend at a heterosexual wedding. I would come home from weekend-long trips planning weddings at our wedding venue and tell my wife word for word how much same-sex marriage was on the minds of Minnesotans since the marriage equality bill passed. About how folks from Iowa who didn’t outwardly seem to lean politically leftward bragged about how they had it first.

These interactions with awesome people who really wanted to show their support and process what marriage equality meant started to eventually reveal to me that pre-legal gay marriage had suddenly become “other than real” to people who may have only just realized it wasn’t real. All because of a piece of paper, an officiant, two witnesses, and consent. Things we have been fighting our asses off to have the right to and that I’m so amazed and grateful for. But that doesn’t change the feeling I have and reality I experience that legal marriage in Minnesota (coupled with the repeal of DOMA) annihilated collective acceptance of my pre-legal marriage and undermined my prior use of the words wife and wedding and marriage. In fighting for the real, my marriage became make-believe other. For me getting gay married is an exuberant, happy, exhilarating, grateful but shocking reminder that my marriage was not real to most people prior to it becoming legal. It’s incredibly conflicting.

As a wedding planner I am at the center of what same-sex weddings look like and I sob every time I hear “by the power invested in me by the state of Minnesota.” My eyes just welled up writing that. I’m ridiculously happy to have legal rights and for my in-laws to be actual in-laws. I’m excited that in a few years couples getting married won’t have to think about this sort of thing. But I’ve been married since July 23, 2011, and nothing can change that. ■



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# { REAL WEDDINGS }



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**Florist:** Centre Floral, Sauk Centre

**Wedding Coordinator:** Louy Theeuwen & Susan  
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**Cake:** Byerly's of Plymouth

**Invitations:** Pear Tree

**Photographer:** Tracy LeCapitaine Photography



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August 1, 2013

**Dating Since:**

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**Ceremony:**

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# A THRIFTY, YET CLASSY AFFAIR: HOW TO (REALISTICALLY) THROW A BUDGET WEDDING



When Krissy and I got engaged, we were through the roof with excitement. We were thrilled with the prospect of spending our lives together, and we couldn't wait to legalize our commitment in front of all our friends and family. Two or three days into the engagement, however, I started to get overwhelmed by the amount of time and effort needed to plan a celebration that would elegantly capture our uniquely dorky, DIY style. More importantly, how the hell was I supposed to plan a wedding that would feel like the best party of our lives while not blowing our budget? As tempting as it might be to throw the most lavish party possible, we both recognized that one day is not worth spending the first years of marriage whirling in debt. Though we're still in the process of planning our impending nuptials, we've discovered that there are plenty of ways to plan an awesome wedding day without ruining our current, comfortable financial situation.

We started our planning by setting a budget that we felt would be reasonable for a one-day event, keeping in mind that a bit of wiggle room would allow us to make the day special. Though the average American wedding costs between \$18,000-25,000, we agreed to aim for \$15,000 (excluding honeymoon). We then compared several wedding budget planners from different planning resources, and we created one that included everything we felt we needed for our wedding. (We were especially excited to cut all the groom's expenses...until we realized that we then had to double all the bride's expenses.)

After our list of necessary expenses was complete, we discussed what we each felt we needed to splurge on, and what we could do

without. I couldn't live without live music at our ceremony, but I could survive without a DJ at the reception. Krissy requires a getaway car with flair, but she was more than happy to rule out the use of a traditional limo. We both found it extremely unnecessary to go all-out with our dresses, though we both felt that we each deserved an actual wedding dress of some sort. Needless to say, being able to prioritize and compromise allowed us to see exactly WHERE we wanted our money to go, and we could plan accordingly.

Our financial planning also included a thorough analysis of any hidden costs we could possibly imagine. We had to plan for shoes, undergarments, hair accessories, and jewelry to complement our wedding dresses. (We were surprised to discover how much "stuff" went on underneath the gown to hold everything in place.) Though the bridal attendants would be providing their own clothing, we had to consider the cost of the gifts we planned to give our bridal party. Our reception venue budget also had to include the cost of tables, chairs, linens, sound system rental, servers, bartenders, and a liquor license. Creating this exhaustive list of additional costs armed us for thorough discussions with potential venues, and we were able to quickly eliminate any option that was out of our price range or required us to use the services of their preferred—and often more expensive—vendors.

The problem with most advice we found on how to save for weddings is that most suggestions were simply tacky. I am my mother's daughter—the "Tact and Decorum" lectures of my mother and grandmother still ring true in my ears. I know it's not proper etiquette to





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If you're set on holding your wedding at a particular place, but it's out of your price range, ask about weekday rates.

send Facebook invites for your wedding, nor is it anything but tacky to ask for monetary gifts to help pay for your honeymoon. Guests at a wedding should truly feel like guests and should not be encouraged to “BYOB” or “bring a dish to share.” But most of these lessons in etiquette are shunned by columnists who condemn necessary formalities as “antiquated.” Though our wedding will be anything but traditional, I believe there are simply some things you can and cannot do at a wedding. Our goal, therefore, has been to find TACTFUL ways to save on our overall cost of our wedding. The following are our suggestions on ways to save without compromising the integrity of such a special day.

#### THE FUNDAMENTALS: WHEN, WHERE, WHO

One easy way to save thousands (yes, thousands) of dollars is to consider scheduling your wedding on any other day besides Saturday. Even booking a venue for a Friday can make quite a difference; when doing some research, we found that the price difference between Friday and Saturday bookings could be anywhere between \$1000-3000! If you're set on holding your wedding at a particular place, but it's out of your price range, ask about weekday rates. Keep in mind that smaller restaurants, bars, and tap rooms create their rental rates in order to make sure they don't lose money by holding private parties. The most profitable day for most dining and drinking venues tends to be Saturday, so prices will inevitably reflect their standard profit for the day. In addition to being more likely to get your first choice of dates (those fall Saturdays tend to be booked up a year in advance), you'll be able to keep your budget.

In addition to being flexible with timing, keep your mind open to less traditional ceremony and reception venues. I was initially set on having a farm wedding, until I realized how expensive and often inflexible most rural venues are. (Also, since “rural chic” is one of the most popular wedding themes of the year—thank you, Pinterest—these venues book up quickly.) Once we started considering newer and more unconventional venues, we were surprised at the extreme difference in rental costs. An outdoor ceremony could easily take place in a Minneapolis park for \$500, and the University of Minnesota Arboretum has several beautiful gardens available for rent at a reasonable cost. Also, many of our favorite restaurants and taprooms were more than happy to rent their space for a reception. As avid local business supporters, we easily agreed on holding our ceremony and reception at a local tap room. Better yet, the rental price included all of the items on our “hidden reception costs” list. Because our venue is newer on the wedding venue scene, we were able to easily secure our desired date and save thousands of dollars.

Though it's tempting to invite everyone to the best wedding of the season, practice restraint when compiling your guest list. Don't invite

all your co-workers, and refrain from discussing all your wedding details with everyone in the office. Once you discuss wedding details with someone, it's easy to feel pressured into verbally inviting them to your wedding—just don't do it. Make an initial list of people who must be in attendance without consulting your social media sites; this will prevent you from inviting that one college friend whose only interaction with you is to “Poke” you on Facebook. Once you create your initial list, revisit it on a monthly basis and determine whether someone should be removed or added. Weddings should be personal and intimate, and they should involve people who are truly present in your life. Invite people who you intend to interact with throughout your married life, not people who would be fun for a party.

#### THE FLAIR: ATTIRE, DECORATIONS, AND PICTURES

An easy way to save major bucks is to keep yourself on a tight budget for wedding attire. For a wedding between two brides, the cost of two wedding dresses—each one fitting the bride's unique style while coordinating with the other bride's dress—can easily take up most of your budget. Remember that these dresses will only be worn for ONE DAY. Bridal consignment stores offer huge savings on previously worn wedding dresses, and the style and size choices are endless. (Krissy and I visited a bridal consignment store to find wedding dresses to wear when we rode Segways in the Pride Parade. We had a budget of \$300, and we both found dresses that were so beautiful that many people asked if those were our actual wedding dresses. Pretty good deal, if you ask us.) Purchasing a previously-worn dress is budget-conscious, and no one will know your dress isn't brand new. Fortunately, Krissy and I are both pretty low maintenance when it comes to clothing, hair, and makeup. We plan to keep within our dress budget of \$3000 by looking for shorter, less formal dresses that will go well with our more casual wedding.

The most common—and most expensive—wedding decorations are the floral arrangements used in the bridal party and at the reception. When planning your floral decorations, look to see which flowers will be in season at the time of your wedding. In-season flowers are much more abundant and affordable, and you won't be disappointed when you find you can't get your favorite flowers in January. Simpler, seasonal bouquets will absolutely suffice for the bridal party, and flowers can be used sparingly in the ceremony and reception decorations. Use any outdoor scenery or greenery to your advantage; plan an outdoor ceremony near gardens, water features, or sculptures for free decorations. At the reception, create centerpieces that use flowers sparingly. Use gourds or pumpkins as the focal points for fall receptions. Gussy up wine bottles, antique books, beer growlers, mason jars, or family heirlooms to make unique centerpieces that don't rely on expensive flowers.



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When it comes to choosing photographers for a wedding, make sure to compare prices and evaluate what you're actually paying for.

In order to document your engagement and your special day, it's tempting to go all-out with photography packages. Engagement photos are great for inclusion on Save the Date cards, but that's pretty much it. If you're set on getting engagement photos taken, keep your eye out for free photo session contests and Groupon deals, or have a shutter-savvy friend use a digital camera to snap some photos. When it comes to choosing photographers for a wedding, make sure to compare prices and evaluate what you're actually paying for. Some photography packages will automatically include the services of two photographers, and some will have options for "apprentice" packages. Evaluate your needs (how many hours you want covered, how many photographers you need, which moments you know you want captured), and make sure your package fits your needs. In order to save on reception coverage, send the professionals home early, and encourage guests to use their own cameras and get creative. Create an Instagram hashtag for your wedding, or use one of several awesome wedding photo apps like WedPics and WedSocial.

### THE FUN STUFF: FOOD, BOOZE, AND WEDDING FAVORS

Krissy and I love fun food, and we knew we had to find awesome eats without ruining our budget. In order to fit our more casual wedding, we gladly decided to forego the traditional plated dinner (which can cost anywhere between \$20-70 per person) for a more casual option. Most caterers will offer buffet options that are substantially cheaper than the plated dinner, but don't feel tied to even serve a traditional catered meal. Have the chef in your circle make large pans of paella, or plan a pig roast. Or, to capture the essence of local flavor, consider using your favorite food truck with several scrumptious options for guests to choose from. If you're planning a more formal wedding, consider serving heavy hors d'oeuvres instead of a meal. Another great, unique option is to hold an earlier wedding with a brunch reception (perfect for celebrations involving children, and for people who prefer to avoid the inevitable drunken end to the reception). For even sweeter savings, skip the traditional 3-tiered wedding cake and order festive cupcakes instead.

If you're like us, it's impossible to imagine a wedding celebration without some sort of booze. Even though it's far cheaper to simply avoid serving booze at a wedding, that was a price cut we really couldn't justify. We realized, though, that the TYPE and AMOUNT of booze served can save quite a bit of money. Serving just beer and wine is substantially cheaper than having a full bar of mixed drinks, and it also prevents things from getting too rowdy. Since we are having our reception at a taproom, we chose to serve amazing local beer and have a gluten-free option available as well. In an effort to avoid

binge-drinking (those "free drinks for an hour" situations don't always end well), we plan to distribute drink tickets for three rounds of beer each (approximately \$1,500); once the drink tickets are done, people will have the option of purchasing more beer. Just remember, tips for bartenders are NOT optional, and you should plan to tip at the end of the night for the total amount of booze purchased.

Finally, most couples choose to have a small favor that guests can take home at the end of the night. A favor is a nice little "thank you" for guests, and they should be personal and thoughtful. It doesn't have to be anything extravagant or expensive, but it should be something useful or something tasty. Keep in mind that most trinkets are either forgotten at the reception or quickly thrown away at home, so shy away from inscribed bells, key chains, and anything that somehow resembles something purchased at a tourist shop. Instead, offer mini bags of your favorite coffee, a bottle of your favorite beer tied with ribbon, handmade caramel apples, homemade jams and butters, or handmade pottery. Your guests will feel honored by the personal element to your favor, and they'll appreciate being able to actually use or consume it.

A wedding doesn't have to have a high price tag in order to be a success, nor do you have to go all-out to ensure a great party for your guests. Our plan to throw a celebration that reflects our personalities while avoiding all the stress of wedding-induced debt has only been capable due to a great deal of flexibility, creativity, and open communication. By doing most of the work together, we've been able to keep a realistic handle on our finances and still get our dream wedding. At the end of the day on August 22, 2014, we will formally announce ourselves as Mrs. and Mrs., free of debt and full of love.

**If you're willing to think outside the box, there are many ways you can easily shave \$100-1,000 off your budget. Here are some additional ways to save:**

1. Have an outgoing, close friend get ordained online (\$20-30) instead of hiring an outside party to officiate the wedding (\$150-400). Writing the ceremony "script" together also allows for a uniquely personal ceremony.
2. Create a garden that will yield the flowers and plants you plan to use in your wedding, or purchase flowers wholesale from a grocer or florist. Have the "green thumb" in your circle arrange the flowers.
3. Skip printed programs for the ceremony. Everyone knows what's going to happen—a wedding ceremony is pretty self-explanatory. Most ceremony programs are either left behind or tossed, so you'll also be helping the environment by reducing the amount of waste produced. ◻



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by Shane Lueck

## You May Kiss the Bride, Thanks to Google

We all want important life moments — graduation, getting married, having a first born — to be perfect. Every last detail should be taken care of and the fewer the hiccups, the better. For many couples, a wedding is a chance to celebrate love with all of the important people in your life. It also happens to be the largest, most complicated party you'll ever host. From tracking guest RSVPs, to picking the right florist, DJ and caterer, to coordinating every last detail with your wedding party, it's no surprise that the process can become overwhelming and expensive real quick, turning even the most kind-hearted soul into "bridezillas" (or the occasional "groomzilla").

Enter Google to the rescue!

Google seems to be on a never-ending quest to make our lives easier, and I thank them for it. From maps to calendars, the search engine has come out with a resource to make nearly every aspect of life that much easier. But, wait for it, Google has made a big push into the wedding planning scene, launching a full-fledged planning portal for brides- and grooms-to-be.

Google Weddings, launched just over two years ago, started small and relatively unknown, but has grown into a destination that houses wedding-specific templates in Google Sites, Google Docs and Picasa for save-the-dates, wedding websites, planning materials, tracking the budget, invitations and more.

These customized, pre-made documents are not only incredibly organized and thorough in practically any detail you would need, they are also "smart" templates. This means that, for example, when typing in the cost of your dress, it will also update what percent of the budget you've spent, how much is left, etc. — automati-

cally! Math? Who needs it? Google's got you covered.

How can this work for you? Take the simple address book as an example. Instead of emailing hundreds of guests and copy/pasting hundreds of addresses into a spreadsheet, you can send a Google form for guests to fill out, which will collect the addresses into a spreadsheet automatically.

Can this get better? Yes. Because these documents, spreadsheets and forms live online in "the cloud," you can easily get help by sharing them with your parents or bridal party, and you can access them from the bakery, bridal shop or anywhere around town using your smartphone. Plus, you never have to worry about versions and email attachments, because everything is always up to date.

Simple, right?

Having the tools to plan a wedding is a good start, but you also need to know what questions to ask when interviewing vendors and which factors to consider when inviting guests or choosing music. To give you a leg up, Google has partnered with wedding planner Michelle Rago to provide tips and guidance. As an industry leader, she specializes in truly personalized weddings (check out her book *Signature Weddings: Creating a Day Uniquely Your Own*), making Rago the perfect advisor and spokesperson for your vision. Appearing in nearly every bridal magazine in the country, Rago also relishes passing on her experience with creating ultimate destination weddings. Within almost every template there is a little bubble full of tips and tricks of the trade from Rago's many years of experience meant to make the process (already made easy by Google) even easier.

To learn more about simplifying wedding planning with Google, check out [www.google.com/weddings](http://www.google.com/weddings). □

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Bill with Bill Hermann Entertainment ([www.BillHermann.com](http://www.BillHermann.com)) and Julie Lyford with Fabulous Functions ([www.FabulousFunctions.com](http://www.FabulousFunctions.com)) are two of the most popular and sought after wedding professionals in the country and have been collaborating with couples for over 45 combined years to create beautiful, fun, unique, and memorable celebrations. Have a question about getting married? They have the answers!

**Dear Bill and Julie,**

**What are the top three wedding questions you are asked?**

Wow! That's a tough one. As you might guess, we've answered hundreds of questions and each one is just as important to our couples as the last. But, if we really had to narrow it down to the ones asked the most, these are our top three:

**#1 – How can I tell if a vendor is GLBT-friendly?**

Ask! Be direct and be blunt if you have to, but remember the vendor may not actually know what GLBT means...so be specific. Try

this: "Do you have a problem working with a gay couple?" or "Have ever worked with a same-sex couple?"

Trust us, they may say that they are comfortable but if they haven't actually worked with a GLBT couple they may find they are uncomfortable and didn't even know it. Check their website, do they have any images of GLBT weddings they have done? Ask for client references.

Then, ask yourself: Am comfortable with this person? Do I like them? Do I trust them? If you answer "no" to any of those questions, then this vendor relationship is just not the right fit. If you answer "yes," do whatever it takes to work with them, you will thank us.



Cheesecakes by Muddy Paws Cheesecake. Photo by Custom Creations Photography-Amy Zellmer



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Cupcake truck? Yes, please! Photos courtesy of A Cupcake Social

## #2 – How do I make my wedding unique without the whole thing just being about a GLBT wedding? I don't want it to look like unicorns and glittery rainbows all over the place.

Don't count out the power and romance of well-placed unicorns and glittery rainbows. Actually, the answer is simpler than what most people will allow themselves to believe: Your wedding is about you and, by definition, it is and should be unique. Most people think that the only way to make things unique is to find things that no one has seen. That works, but what works better is choosing things that actually matter to you. You choose to have off-white and antique roses?

Why? Was it just because they're pretty or do those choices mean something to you, your family, your history, or—better yet—your story? Make sure to tailor those choices around who you are and what you like. Take it one step further and be sure you can communicate those reasons to your guests in some way.

What is your favorite dessert? Cheesecake? Cookies? Ice cream? Then why do a traditional cake? Share your favorite dessert with your guests.

Do you love a certain food truck? Have them roll up to the wedding with their specialty! Think of how awesome it would be to top off

Continued on page 34 ➔



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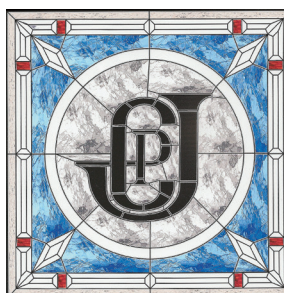
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**#3 – I have to order invitations but nothing I see is really “us.” Where can I find the perfect, unique invitation?**

You don’t have to find it, you can have it created for you. Work with an artist on Etsy to create something that is unique for the two of you. There are also local artists who can come up with wonderfully customized invitations. Set the tone from the beginning, don’t settle for second best. ☐

Ask Bill and Julie a question by sending us an email at [bill@billhermann.com](mailto:bill@billhermann.com) or [julie@fabulousfunctions.com](mailto:julie@fabulousfunctions.com)



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## { TRENDS }

By Madeline Johnson, photos by Studio806

A photograph of a wedding aisle runner in a large, high-ceilinged hall. The runner is white with a light blue geometric pattern. It is flanked by black chairs with white flowers. The hall has large arched windows and a high ceiling with a large, tiered chandelier. The text is overlaid on the runner.

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sota. Do it up in style! Haven't  
been following the latest in wedding  
trends? Have no fear, Rachelle Mazumdar,  
director of weddings + events at Style-Architects,  
has been planning weddings and special events for  
over eight years. Here, she shares with us the top trends  
she is seeing with weddings to inspire you on how to achieve  
that glam wedding that will leave all wedding guests saying, "I do!"

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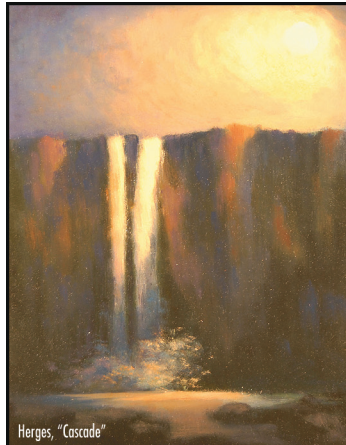
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### STEP UP YOUR {FOOD AND WINE} GAME

One of the most effective ways to create that glam wedding is by amping up the food and drink and creating more of an experience for your guests with some unique twists. Mazumdar is finding that more and more couples are straying away from the traditional flow of service where guests are seated and immediately served salad, chicken, and then cake. If you are a foodie, Mazumdar recommends changing it up with a variety of food stations, a raw bar, or even coursing your meals with different food and wine pairings. “Couples can also put that personal spin on their wedding by hand-selecting their wines and agreeing to pay the corkage fee,” said Mazumdar. What about dessert? Instead of a cake, couples can create their own mini dessert bar {which make for not only satisfied guests but also beautiful photos, as well}!

### {DON'T} GO WITH THE FLOW

Although there are always traditional elements to every wedding, Mazumdar recommends leaving the “something old” to a different aspect of the wedding and keeping the flow of events fresh and modern. Many of Mazumdar’s clients are adapting the East Coast-style of service. With this unique style of service, guests are often invited straight to the dance floor upon entering the room and sometimes dancing is incorporated in-between the different meal courses. “In addition to keeping the guests engaged and entertained, it also helps with the overall energy of the event,” says Mazumdar. Alongside this different way to actively engage your guests, Mazumdar is also finding that many couples are swapping the order of events, such as a pre-ceremony social hour. “This works especially well for Friday weddings, when guests are rushing from work. Having a cocktail right away allows guests to unwind and get in the festive spirit after a long week at the office,” says Mazumdar.

### PUT A BRAND ON IT

Another way couples can achieve a glam wedding is through incorporating elements that are custom expressions of them. Mazumdar is finding that unique and personally branded weddings are replacing themes. “Branding is so much more than creating a monogram and slapping it all over your wedding,” says Mazumdar.

Mazumdar likes to sit down and learn about the couples’ stories




Pin spots on florals and custom uplighting on the walls by Level 11 drew attention to the centerpieces and enhanced the space.

before diving into the planning process. That way, bits and pieces that stand for the couple can be incorporated into the wedding-day elements. “It is important to keep the branding of the wedding cohesive,” says Mazumdar. “Everything from the linens and paper materials to the cake should be stylistically consistent.”

### LOUNGE AROUND



Guest comfort plays a huge role in achieving that top-notch wedding. Mazumdar is finding lounge groupings as one of the hottest trends in weddings. Additional seating is great for those non-dancing guests and creates more inviting areas for guests to mingle. “Whether it is full groupings of pieces or simply s-shaped benches, lounge groupings create a swanky, night club feel for your guests as well as generate movement in the room,” says Mazumdar.







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This hydrangea runner (designed by Martha's Gardens) surrounded by candlelight served as a stunning focal point in the room.

### MODERN GEOMETRIC STYLE

For lovers of color and pizzazz, Mazumdar recommends incorporating some graphic patterns to achieve that “wow” factor to the design of your wedding. “This trend evolves from the geometric patterns appearing on the runways,” says Mazumdar. “However, I’m seeing a huge demand for modern, sleek designs in décor, cake design, and even wedding fashion. It’s a great way to infuse some style without the traditional ruffles, sequins, and bows.”

### CREATE A FOCAL POINT

Of course, every couple wants a glam wedding with top-notch design finishes throughout. However, the burdened budget doesn’t always agree. Mazumdar encourages her couples to create different focal points throughout the room in order to “wow” guests without having to break the bank completely. “A cluster of chandeliers, a beautiful cake table, or a floral-heavy head table all act as great focal points that are sure to strike up conversation among your guests,” says Mazumdar.

### FIFTY SHADES OF BLUE

Thanks to blue for being voted Pantone Color of the Year, it has now become a perfect palette for wedding and event décor. “I’ve done everything from turquoise blue paired with poppy red for a Fourth of



Calhoun Beach Club couple went graphic with a black, white and chartreuse cake by Gateaux Inc.

July affair to deep, rich jewel-toned blues paired with orange florals,” says Mazumdar, who is finding these multi-seasonal cool blues extremely red hot in weddings this year.

### LASER CUT

A new trend showing up at weddings this year is laser cut designs. “Laser cutting is a technique for creating intricately cut patterns,” says Mazumdar. She is seeing this unique trend incorporated in everything from paper products and linens to wedding gowns and cakes.

### LIGHTS, CAMERAS, DANCING!

Additional lighting is Mazumdar’s most-encouraged décor must-have. Let’s face it, flowers are expensive, and it’s a shame to lose those beauties once the natural light dims and the dancing begins. “Whether through additional lighting fixtures, pin spots, uplighting, gobos, or moving lights, investing in lighting is the perfect way to transform your wedding reception or event space from standard to simply stunning,” says Mazumdar. □

Style-Architects, the creative company which also designed and styled the men’s wedding spread this issue, is a boutique lifestyle services company dedicated to providing clients with imaginative and awe-inspiring weddings and events as well as distinctive styling services for both individuals and businesses. For more information on its services, visit [www.style-architects.com](http://www.style-architects.com) and follow on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



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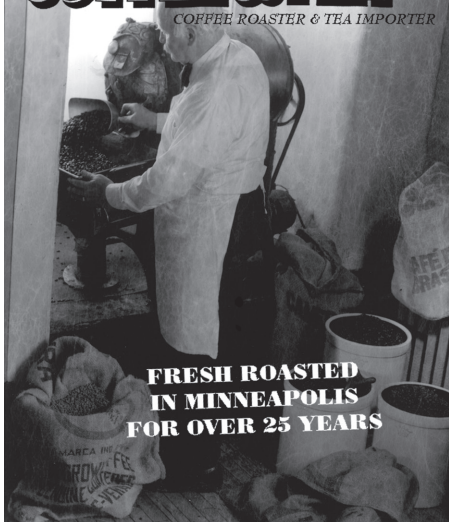
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# BLACK TIE NOT REQUIRED

Men's Wedding Fashion at Le Méridien Chambers Hotel  
Styled and Produced by Style-Architects  
Photos by Armour Photography  
Wardrobe Stylists: Tim Creagan & Emily Klipp with Style-Architects  
Makeup: Nicole Fae

**On Koy:** Black suit coat (\$898) and checked tie (\$138) from J. Novachis, white shirt (\$168) from MartinPatrick3, navy shoes (\$298) by Cole Haan, palladium band (\$1,425) and silver watch (\$4,500) from JB Hudson Jewelers

**On Shane:** Striped navy textured blazer (\$498) and floral and striped tie (\$188) from J. Novachis, white shirt (\$168) from MartinPatrick3, rose gold polycarbonate ring (\$3,060) and 18K rose gold watch (\$25,700) by Cartier from JB Hudson Jewelers



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**On Koy:** Grey suit coat (\$550) and grey suit pant (\$270) by Moods of Norway from MartinPatrick3, light blue shirt (\$135), bold stripe tie (\$105) and red pocket square (\$35) from MartinPatrick3

**On Shane:** Navy plaid suit coat (\$395) and navy plaid check pants (\$195) by Moods of Norway from MartinPatrick3, white shirt (\$168) by Ted Baker from MartinPatrick3, striped tie (\$146) from MartinPatrick3, rose gold polycarbonate ring (\$3,060) and 18K rose gold watch (\$25,700) by Cartier from JB Hudson Jewelers





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**On Shane:** Navy check pant (\$195) by Moods of Norway from MartinPatrick3, striped shirt (\$145) from MartinPatrick3, socks (\$15.50) and black shoes (\$198) by Cole Haan, rose gold polycarbonate ring (\$3,060) and 18K rose gold watch (\$25,700) by Cartier from JB Hudson Jewelers





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**On Shane:** Navy check pant (\$195) by Moods of Norway from MartinPatrick3, striped shirt (\$145) from MartinPatrick3, black shoes (\$198) by Cole Haan, rose gold polycarbonate ring (\$3,060) and 18K rose gold watch (\$25,700) by Cartier from JB Hudson Jewelers







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From top: Striped tie (\$165) from MartinPatrick3, 18K rose gold watch (\$25,700) by Cartier from JB Hudson Jewelers, and shoes (\$198) by Cole Haan.



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# A CRAFTED AFFAIR

**Women's Wedding Fashion at Bent Paddle  
Brewing Co. in Duluth**  
Written by Alyson Newquist, Bash Collective  
Styled and Produced by Bash Collective  
Photos by Canary Grey Photography

At Bash Collective ([www.thebashcollective.com](http://www.thebashcollective.com)) we work with many to-be-wed lesbian couples hoping to host intimate gatherings reflective of their personalities and love. Across the board they want to make their weddings more than just a celebratory party, but also don't want to simply replicate hetero-wedding norms. These couples want attire they are comfortable with and are weary of traditional, gendered wedding attire and the hair and makeup that often accompany it.

Equipped with these observations and our desire to work with some of Duluth's LGBT-friendly wedding professionals we headed northward for a styled shoot celebrating intimacy, nature, and a real representation of what same-sex weddings look like for many couples. We wanted to highlight the small, intimate, sometimes two-person celebrations many couples are having across the state while showcasing fashion and décor styling that blend together one couple's individual comfort levels, tastes, and interests.



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Photo: lauren b. photography



Wing Ta of Canary Grey Photography ([www.canarygrey.com](http://www.canarygrey.com)) captured the collaboration and her familiarity working with same-sex couples is evident in the naturalness of the moments she captured.

Duluth-based florists Saffron & Grey ([www.saffronandgrey.com](http://www.saffronandgrey.com)) designed the floral for the shoot. They have been designing for same-sex weddings non-stop since marriage equality passed. Their no-minimum policy is great for couples looking for amazing, personalized design for smaller weddings.

Derick Cich Makeup Artistry ([www.derickcich.com](http://www.derickcich.com)), also based in Duluth, added to the couple's natural beauty without making them uncomfortable as women who don't ordinarily wear makeup. Cich also provides male grooming services for men hoping to look their best on their wedding day who might want to tame some brows, simmer down hairline shine, or cover up skin imperfections. Kristy Johnson took care of the couple's hair for the shoot, doing them up as they'd normally be done, with just a little more polish for the photography.







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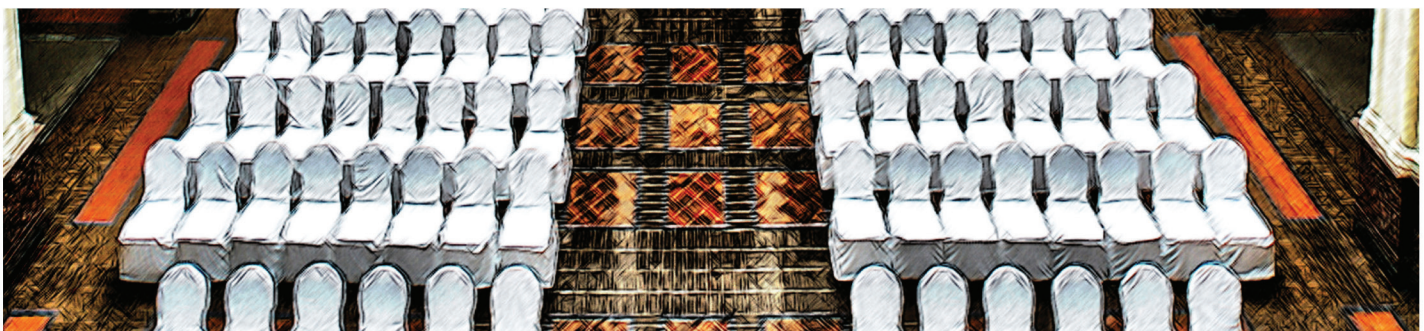
Bent Paddle Brewing Company offers a modern Duluth setting with a nod to the city's industrial aesthetic. The co-owners of the brewery, Bryon and Karen Tonnis and Laura and Colin Mullen, were previously wedding photographers and event planners, respectively, prior to starting the brewery. Their combined eye for design created the industrial chic taproom used for our setting. The space is available for rent for events any day of the week. We utilized the brewery's existing tables and chairs and Saffron & Grey created loose, organic floral pieces in containers mostly sourced from thrift stores. The floral and natural items like amethysts, moss, a butterfly, rocks, and carved wooden animals tempered the machine-age chairs, exposed brick and corrugated metal walls of the taproom.

Two brides often face the challenge of finding wedding attire that reflects each of their styles and goes well together but doesn't match too much. For a couple who feels more comfortable in suits/suiting separates choosing pieces from the same collection within a line of clothing is generally a good place to start. Collections are generally made to look good next to one another either on the runway or in stores. Adding in a piece or two that reflects a bride's personal style and further differentiates the outfits is easier from that starting point.





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Crazy-in-love Duluth couple, Allyson Rolph and Sarah Lee, joined us for the day to be photographed alongside their photogenic husky Monet. Both women feel most comfortable in more androgynous clothing and rarely dress up. To respect this common lesbian wedding occurrence and veer away from the expectation of brides in white, we styled the couple with unexpected textures like leather, silk, and wool and geometric patterns. Minneapolis-based online shop A MANO ([www.weshopamano.com](http://www.weshopamano.com)), a curated store of handmade goods, provided geometric necklaces that subbed in for the usual tie.

Rolph is the Head Brewer at Thirsty Pagan Brewing ([www.thirstypaganbrewing.com](http://www.thirstypaganbrewing.com)) in Superior, WI, where Lee bartends in addition to her non-profit urban farming work in Duluth. They settled in easily to the settings for the shoot, Bent Paddle Brewing Company ([www.bentpaddlebrewing.com](http://www.bentpaddlebrewing.com)) and a yurt being constructed at the Hartley Nature Center ([www.hartleynature.org](http://www.hartleynature.org)) by Scott Graden, owner of New Scenic Café ([www.sceniccafe.com](http://www.sceniccafe.com)).

**On Sarah:** Jacquard one button blazer (\$76.80) and “Quinn” tuxedo jacquard skinny ankle pants (\$79.00) by Halogen from Nordstrom, gold-tipped western shirt (\$24.95) from Forever 21, “Summit Necklace” in black and gold (\$65) by Cursive Design from A MANO, Frye 15R Harness Boot (\$298) from Frye.com

**On Allyson:** Faux leather motorcycle jacket (\$44.99) by Mossimo from Target, “Rachel” shirt (\$248.00) by Rachel Roy from Nordstrom, “Quinn” jacquard skinny ankle pants (\$79.00) by Halogen from Nordstrom, chiffon bow neck tie (\$14.24) from ASOS, vintage shoes





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**On Sarah:** Vintage long coat by Land's End from Everyday People, plaid shirt (\$44.99) from Gap, navy blazer (\$198.00) from J.Crew, "Home Sweet Home" necklace (\$138.00) by Wazo Designs from A MANO, multi-color tweed pants (\$69.99) from Urban Outfitters, "Donata" boots (\$298.00) from Nordstrom, black wide-brimmed hat (\$24.95) from H&M, orange scarf with foxes (\$24.00) by Cooperative from Urban Outfitters

**On Allyson:** Vintage tweed blazer by Ralph Lauren from Everyday People, cream flannel shirt (\$24.95) from H&M, grey sweater (\$49.00) from Kohl's, grey vest (\$69.00) from J. Jill, eggplant trousers (\$49.99) from Gap, felt hat (\$29.00) from Gap, geometric navy scarf (\$14.00) from Maurice's



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Hartley Nature Center's trails and its new yurt offered a more private, natural setting for the couple to be photographed in. We imagined a couple eloping in this space or visiting it for photos after a casual courthouse legal ceremony. The space allowed for shots of the couple walking through the woods and also for more posed shots within the yurt. The contrast of the posed, stylized shots within an outdoor setting like a yurt fits with a couple's decision to formalize their commitment while doing so in a simple, yet beautiful way.

We selected dressier-than-everyday looks that were still practical for taking a celebratory fall hike in Duluth. Stylish outerwear that corresponds with a wedding look is essential for weddings with a potential for cooler weather. We paired warm jackets over sweaters with scarves and rolled trousers and boots, and topped the couple off with wool hats. We covered the ground with textiles and throws and hung woven tapestries by Liz Toohey-Wiese sourced from A MANO amongst Saffron & Grey's ferns and floral. Monet the husky rested at his moms' feet amongst the styled items.







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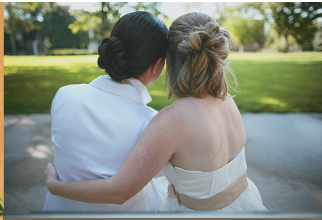
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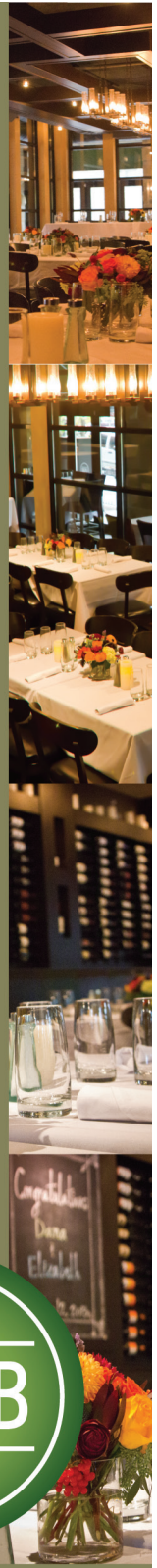
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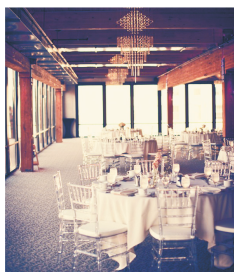
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The concept of A'BULAE is to transform the space to match the vision, instead of having to design the event around the space. With a variety of digital decor, interactive media, in-house lighting and sound, A'BULAE allows you to change the look and feel of the venue to what speaks to you and your partner. As an all-inclusive venue with a goal to make things easy, A'BULAE offers 29 different items in one flat rate rental (crystal chiavari chairs, a PhotoMingle photo booth, game room, and on-site event coordinator just to name a few). Although it is recommended that couples choose from a list of services – with discounts! – from A'BULAE's sister company, Bellagala, feel free to bring in your own vendors as desired.

A'BULAE opened with their first wedding on June 1, 2013, already celebrating one same-sex wedding on September 8 with several others already on the books. "We're excited about the passage of the marriage amendment and the opportunities it's given all couples to plan the true wedding they've been dreaming of," says Jenna Ferguson, an event coordinator with A'BULAE. "It's our job to make that happen."

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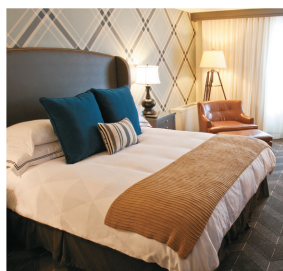
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With the recent passing of marriage equality, The Commons Hotel has released an Equality Ever-After package for same-sex couples interested in the space. The hotel offers engaged couples a choice of rooms with picturesque views of downtown Minneapolis along with essentials for the big day. The package includes professional photography, "Mr. & Mr." or "Mrs. & Mrs." custom chalk-art drawing, bottle of champagne, and a couples stationery class, among other perks.

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## WEDDING VENUES: NEW AND RENEWED

**LOWERTOWN EVENT CENTER****Guests: 250 seated****Starting at \$1,500****Available for: Ceremony, Reception**

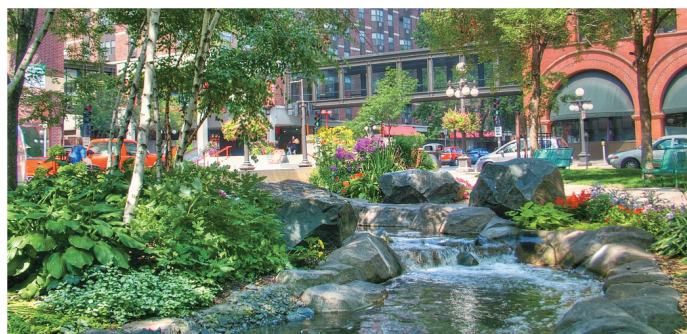
Enter the unique space of Lowertown Event Center (full of natural stone and brick and located on one of the most beautiful parks in the Twin Cities) and you shall receive excellence. "I feel that we brought this space back from the dead and gave it a beautiful purpose," says Charice Bakke, the event facilitator at LEC. "I believe it is exactly what the space was meant to be." Included in a rental fee are tables, chairs, lighting, the dance floor, and access to the entire Lowertown Event Center. And, although the bar is vendored by Crave, couples are free to bring in a caterer and other vendors of their own choosing.

The inaugural event when LEC first opened this past August was a lesbian couple renewing their vows after ten years of marriage and two daughters. "I owe the beauty of the first client suite to them because I knew they wanted to get ready together so I made it much larger," Bakke says. "We all have the right to choose a partner in this life and to make that partnership legal by law and I'm happy to provide a lovely space in which any couple can do that."

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[www.lowertowneventcenter.com](http://www.lowertowneventcenter.com)**MILLENNIUM HOTEL MINNEAPOLIS****Guests: 160-350****No rental fee****Available for: Ceremony, Reception**

Millennium Hotel Minneapolis completed a \$22 million renovation in April 2013, transforming the venue. Perhaps the most notable attribute is the glass dome looking out across downtown Minneapolis – no other venue offers such a dramatic view of the skyline. Many couples enjoy the newly renovated Millennium Hotel's no rental fee, however this also comes with a food and beverage minimum of \$6,500 to \$10,000 depending on the space requested and date. In addition, the couple will receive a complimentary room for their wedding night as well as tables, chairs, dining ware, linens, table accents, and the dance floor included. As a seasoned event space, it comes with a list of preferred vendors, but couples are also allowed to hire vendors that fit their needs.

Jessica Hazelton, the Senior Catering Sales Manager, says, "Regardless of the event, our catering team takes a very personalized approach to every wedding. Each event is planned and detailed to reflect the couple's personal style and taste." Couples at the Millennium Hotel Minneapolis can expect a smooth and memorable wedding planning experience.

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## WEDDING VENUES: NEW AND RENEWED

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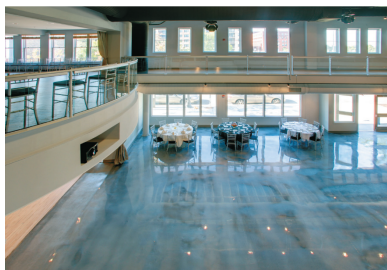
With a multi-level space, Muse Event Center is completely customizable to the needs of the event. "We have created a blank canvas for your imagination to take over," says Noelle Singerhouse, Muse's Sales Manager. "The design is simple yet elegant allowing for clients to put their own spin on the place." The space offers custom lighting and sound capabilities, allowing the ceremony and reception to take place within the same venue. The rental includes catering exclusively through Crave, as well as the cost of 100 valeted vehicles in an area of Minneapolis not known for ample parking.

Having opened only a matter of weeks ago, Singerhouse and her staff are eager to celebrate love with couples. "Muse welcomes anyone and everyone to our space," Singerhouse says. "We are excited for the new law that allows same sex marriage and could not be more proud of our state."

**952-562-5620**

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[www.musemn.com](http://www.musemn.com)**BIN WINE BAR****Guests: 100****Starts at \$10,000****Available for: Ceremony, Reception**

Although the minimum price might be a bit more, the cost also covers food and liquor costs from Bin's exclusive vendor list. With a wine collection from around the world, wine drinkers will be more than satisfied, but Bin also offers beer and spirits. An exciting dinner menu is meant to be paired wonderfully with the extensive wine list. Situated directly on Mears Park, Bin Wine Bar is an urban, sexy, cozy venue perfect for a cocktail lounge-type wedding.

Situated in the historic Park Square Court, the building's Romanesque style is sure to have wedding guests captivated with its heritage and charm. Rebecca Illingworth, the owner of Bin Wine Bar, says "Love is love and we are happy to have all loving couples here to celebrate the beginning of their lives together."

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I adore the shift from summer to the crisp autumn and winter months. The season provides antique hydrangea, dinner plate dahlias, and, best of all, an abundance of foliage, grasses, and seedpods. Pairing foliage with your bloom of

choice is an important detail when planning your wedding or event. Incorporating interesting varieties of foliage can provide texture and personality when used consistently throughout your floral décor. Shifting your ratio to favor more lush foli-



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(Preceding page and above) Photos by Emma Freeman Photography

(Above) Photos by Lisa Roy

age can provide beauty and significant impact; what better seasons to do so than autumn and winter?

We provide much of the stunning foliage used in our work from our own pesticide-free urban gardens. Our list of foliage plants is ever-growing depending on our latest experiments and inspirations.

Before the first frost, we have access to an abundance of textural foliage. Several varieties of kale grace the garden and become brighter and more hardy in cool weather. We're fond of variegated and unusually colored hosta leaves. Coral bell leaves in subtle gradations from bronze to wine are the perfect accent in boutonnieres. Japanese fern and dusty miller add hints of silver. Scented herb varieties and delicate cascading maidenhair fern fronds remain pretty until Jack Frost bites.

Autumn unfailingly brings seedpods, which may just be my favorite. Fuzzy clematis, maple seedpods (helicopters), and acorns often adorn my work this time of year.

Our fall season is fleeting and once the snow arrives I'm just as smitten with my wintertime loves, grown by local farms who supply a vast variety of foliage. I adore scented cedar and pine. Birch, dogwood, and moss-covered branches provide interesting color, texture, and pretty stem patterns.

Since harvest times are variable throughout the season, the best case is when we have a stellar crop ready, along with open-minded, trusting clients committed to using what's truly in season. In-season varieties are not only best in size, color, and quality, but also a smart investment and an environmentally responsible choice. Trust your florist and allow for flexibility in seasonal flower varieties as well as various color tones within your desired palette. We know our materials and will always have your vision in mind.

Fall weddings are increasingly popular, but the idea of having a winter wedding in Minnesota has instilled a certain degree of fear in the hardest of couples. Brave locals planning winter nuptials should know there are usually some floral and foliage varieties grown just for a special appearance this time of year. Beauties such as amaryllis blossoms, anemones, orchids, magnolia, and the occasional peony may be available, but will also come with a higher price tag. Extra

sparkle provided by candlelight paired with winter white is always a classic motif. It's the perfect time of year to incorporate subtle metallic tones and decadent fruit such as pears and pomegranates.

I'm obsessed with color and believe it will prime the atmosphere for your wedding. Fall and winter weddings invite rich saturated tones of wine, garnet, and coral that become more brilliant when paired with champagne and grey-green. Incorporate a wide range of tones to add depth and diversity. Deep smoky slate, bronze, and plum are lovely colors that are perfect for the season and provide mystery and a hint of sophistication. Accents of cool aqua can create the perfect base for a winter woodland look. Be open to out-of-the-ordinary color combinations and trust your florist's expertise in finding seasonal blooms in hues that best enhance your color scheme.

Include interesting, sentimental or found objects that encourage interaction with your floral decor and other guests. The placement of an interesting object, container, or accent will often stop your guests in their tracks for a closer peek as well as unify the personalized components of your décor. Feathers, seedpods, and moss provide a refreshing change and are lush with inviting texture. Cloche-covered objects invite curiosity whatever the vibe. Include textiles to provide softness or a punch of color and custom stationery to tie it all together. Incorporate flower-filled apothecary bottles and delicate pedestals for an eclectic vintage twist. Wooden crates, silver coupes, and urns provide a rustic formality while the use of classic white ceramic creates a more modern aesthetic. Be playful and inventive with your materials. Most of all, remain calm, bring your sense of humor, and enjoy the process. Our collaboration will be a smashing success. ◻

**Flora Bella** creates lush and vibrant florals with unusual or unexpected elements. Striving for an artful balance of color, texture and form, Flora Bella works with modern, clean and classic elements as well as organic, natural forms with movement and depth – all while staying true to the honesty of the materials. For more information go to [www.florabellastudio.com](http://www.florabellastudio.com).

**Emma Freeman** makes her photography business part of her bigger plan of building a vibrant, sustainable community through relationships, art, and social justice. Her photography pairs her nostalgic, emotional tendencies with warm, beautiful colors. [www.emmafreemanphotography.com](http://www.emmafreemanphotography.com).





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# HOW TO THINK CAKE

by Shane Lueck, photos by Sweet Retreat

There is no doubt about it: Planning a wedding takes a lot of time and may require a lot of help. The cake itself is almost always a showcase piece, and there are as many different cake designs and flavors as there are newlyweds. Where to start? How can you find the perfect cake to represent two personalities among all of the shapes, sizes, and flavors to choose from? Stephanie Kissner from Sweet Retreat offers up some tips for the lucky couple.



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### What tips do you have for couples as they begin planning their cakes?

We recommend couples start thinking about flavors, theme, style, and budget first. With so many seasonal and specialized flavors available you don't have to serve the traditional white cake any longer.

### Is there a general timeline you suggest couples use when planning their cake options?

For medium- to large-sized weddings during the busier wedding months (May through October) we recommend coming in nine months to a year before your event to do the initial consult and to reserve a space on our calendar. For smaller events, or any of the off-season months, two to four months should be plenty of time to take care of your needs.

### How involved are you in the cake planning process?

Our decorators and wedding consultant work hand in hand with the couple to create something perfect for their special day. We can create an entire concept for you or work with the couple's existing ideas to create the perfect cake. It helps us during the design process if couples bring in photographs or printouts of what they like; it helps us to narrow down ideas. Pinterest and Google Images are great re-

sources for ideas and help the creative process move along.

### Have you ever been asked to do anything special by same-sex couples?

We strive to make all our cakes unique and customized to fit our clients personalities and style no matter what the occasion. All of the same-sex couples we have worked with follow the same elegant, simplistic trends found in the traditional wedding styles today.

### How would you suggest same-sex couples make their cakes unique?

Regardless who the couple is we always strive to create a cake that best fits their unique personality and event whether gay or straight. We are very open to any ideas a couple would bring, however outlandish they may seem. We have created a display cake designed for a male couple that uses the tuxedo as a theme playing off the satin lapels and black and white color scheme. ▣

**Sweet Retreat** is a cupcake boutique and bakery located in Minneapolis. With over 25 combined years of professional experience, Sweet Retreat's pastry chefs will make your dream cake come true. For more information, visit Sweet Retreat at [www.thesweetretreatmn.com](http://www.thesweetretreatmn.com) and connect with them on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+.





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# MARKETPLACE

by Shane Lueck

## 1. Cake Pops

Looking for that little extra something to make your day even more special? Many couples are choosing to opt for various desserts instead of a traditional cake and, currently, couples are raving about cake pops. This bite-size trend has swept the nation – good luck visiting Pinterest without finding a few! Gay-owned and -operated, Andrew's Treats provides custom cake pops, cakes, and other wedding-themed treats for your special day. Proud of never having to turn away an order just because it's never been attempted before, the team behind Andrew's Treats work to make your custom order come to life. With a wide array of styles, flavors, and presentation methods, getting a little taste of heaven is as easy as submitting a contact request form. Andrew's Treats Price upon request [www.facebook.com/andrewstreats](http://www.facebook.com/andrewstreats)

1



## 2. Bow Ties for Equality

Tie The Knot, founded by *Modern Family's* Jesse Tyler Ferguson and his husband Justin Mikita, releases a limited edition collection of neckwear seasonally, with proceeds going toward various organizations fighting for equality. Tie the Knot \$25.00 [www.tietheknot.org](http://www.tietheknot.org)



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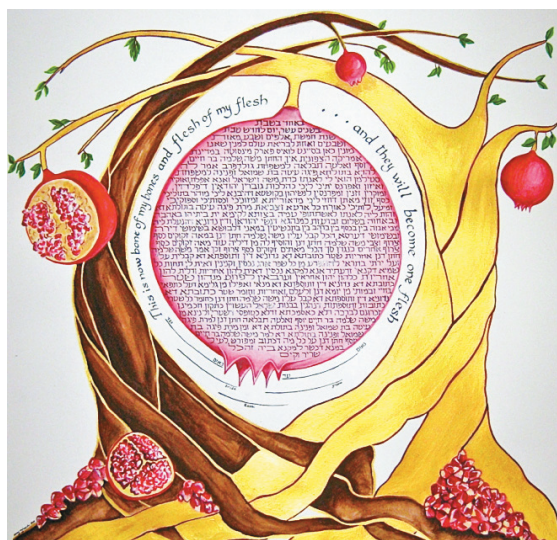
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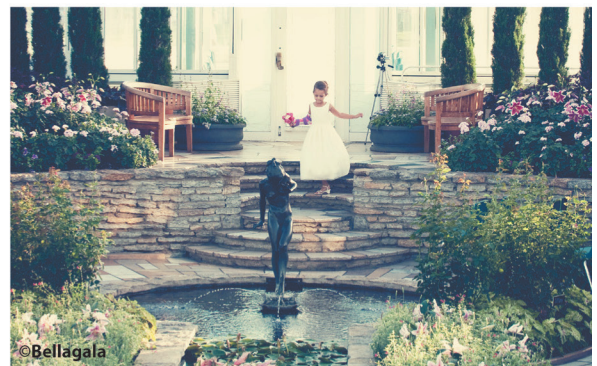
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### 1. S'mores Bar

Mike Nelson founded Campfire Desserts in 2001, inspired by his early experiences as a camp counselor. After obtaining an entrepreneurship grant from St. Olaf College, Nelson has taken his Campfire Desserts trailer to fairs and festivals throughout Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin, featuring the deep-fried s'more on a stick. Since its inception, Campfire Desserts has expanded into catering and S'more Catering was born, which features the "Build Your Own S'more Bar" and other s'more inspired desserts to accompany the s'more bar.

Today, more brides and grooms are opting for more unique desserts as a late-night snack at the reception. S'more Catering provides a large variety of homemade flavored marshmallows, gourmet chocolates and graham crackers, along with a gluten free option. S'more Catering also provides more than just a dessert; it provides an experience of roasting that perfect marshmallow and creating that unique s'more with family and friends. Gift bags are also available for guests to take home.

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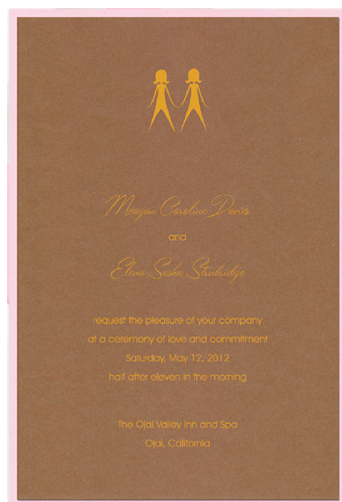
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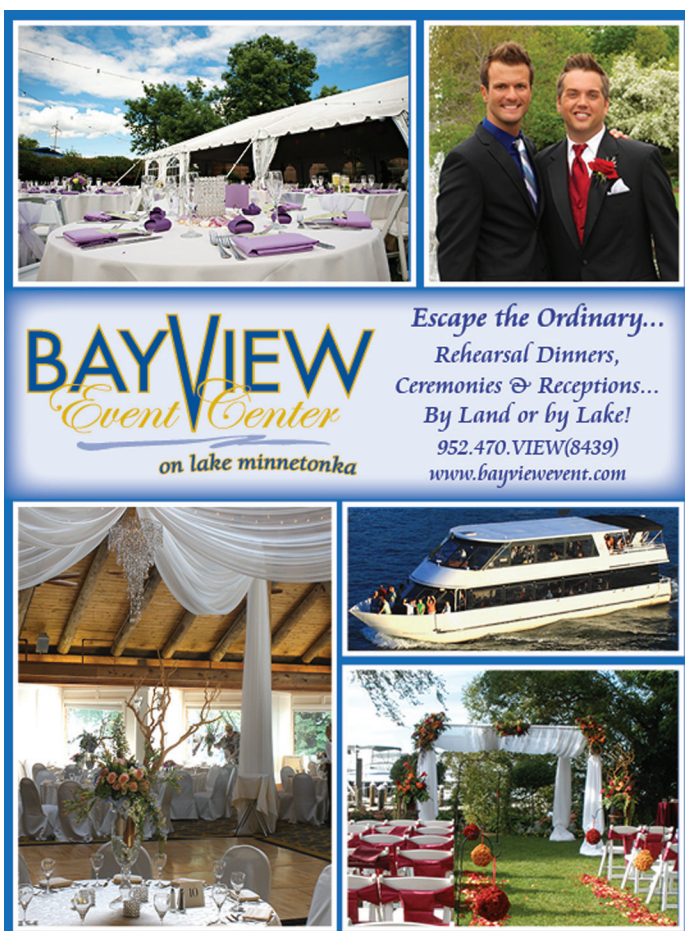


## SUSAN PETERS & LISA DUROSE

**Date of Wedding:** August 1, 2013  
**Dating Since:** August, 1998  
**Ceremony:** Como Park Exedra Garden, St. Paul  
**Reception:** Schaar's Bluff, Hastings  
**Cake:** Desserts by Common Roots Catering  
**Photographer:** Rebecca Jean Lawrence Photography







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# { REAL WEDDINGS }



## LISA VECOLI & MARJEAN HOEFT

**Date of Wedding:** August 1, 2013

**Dating Since:** 1984

**Ceremony:** Mississippi River Overlook Near Home

**Reception:** University of Minnesota Campus Club

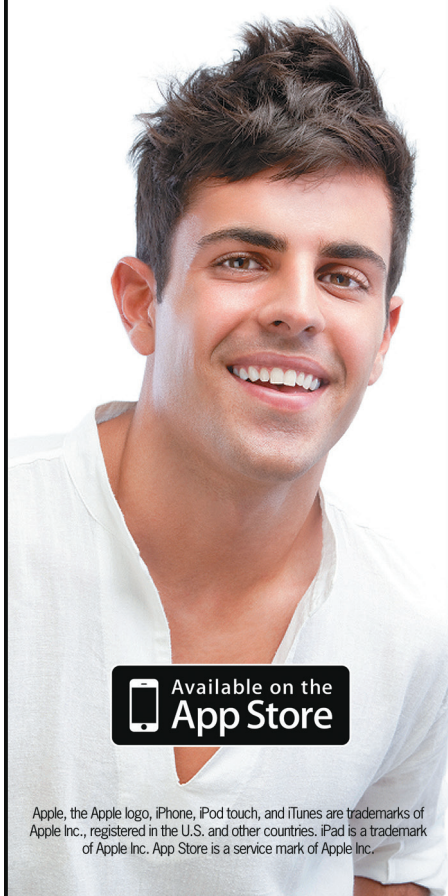
**Cake:** Cupcakes by Angel Food Bakery

**Photographer:** Rebecca Jean Lawrence Photography





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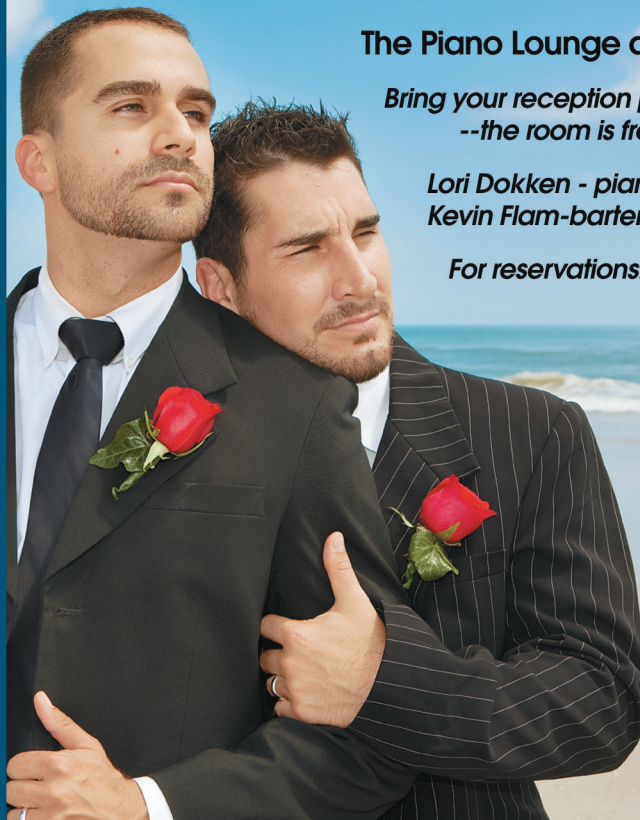
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## JASON ROARK & RODNEY WECK

**Date of Wedding:** August 16, 2013  
**Dating Since:** 1999  
**Ceremony:** Endless Bridge at the Guthrie Theater  
**Reception:** Pohlrad Lobby at the Guthrie Theater  
**Florist:** Indulge & Bloom  
**Wedding Coordinator:** Style-Architects  
**Cake:** Dessert Bar from Cocoa & Fig  
**Invitations:** Beau Papier by Gateaux, Inc.  
**Photographer:** Thea Volk for Rivets and Roses







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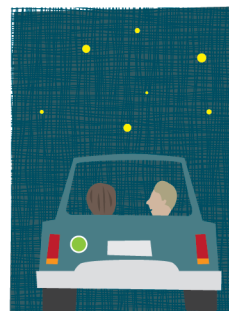
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# { REAL WEDDINGS }



## OLIVIA COLE & GRETCHEN BRANDT

**Date of Wedding:** August 8, 2013

**Dating Since:** June 24, 2012

**Ceremony & Reception:** Aria at the Jeune Lune

**Florist:** Brides

**Wedding Coordinators:** Brides and Kastina at Aria

**Cake:** Cake Pops by Raspberry Bird

**Photographer:** Jackson at  
A Frame Forward Photography







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## KELLI HECKMAN & DANIELLE BOOR

**Date of Wedding:** August 17, 2013  
**Dating Since:** July 1997  
**Ceremony:** Longfellow Gardens - Minnehaha Park, Minneapolis  
**Reception:** Paradise Lady Charter Cruises on the Mississippi River  
**Florist:** Duane Dial  
**Wedding Coordinator:** Joyce Heckman  
**Cake:** 3 Tiers Bakery & Bistro  
**Invitations:** Steve Wahlin - Graphic Designer  
**Photographer:** Alison Bents





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JIM  
McHUGH  
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## STEVE LEARY & JIM MCHUGH

**Date of Wedding:** August 23, 2013  
**Dating Since:** January 18, 1997  
**Ceremony & Reception:** Carpe Diem Guesthouse,  
Provincetown, MA  
**Cake:** Cupcakes  
**Invitations:** Homemade







## PATRICK NOVOSEL & ERWIN BAGOS

**Date of Wedding:** August 22, 2013  
**Dating Since:** August 22, 2009  
**Ceremony:** Small Garden  
 Wedding in Eagan  
**Reception:** TBD  
**Florist:** BW Florist, Golden Valley



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**HEATHER &  
JESSICA OLSON**

**Date of Wedding:** September 22, 2013  
**Dating Since:** March, 2005  
**Ceremony:** Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Minneapolis  
**Reception:** Holy Trinity Lutheran Church  
 Garden, Minneapolis  
**Florist:** 38th Street Flowers and Mother Earth Gardens  
**Cake:** Whatever the Good People Brought to  
 Share at the Potluck  
**Photographers:** Friends & Family





## { REAL WEDDINGS }



### TIFFANY THOMPSON & JENNY EVANS

**Date of Wedding:** August 24, 2013

**Dating Since:** July 26, 2005

**Ceremony:** Lake Calhoun

**Reception:** Lucia's

**Florist:** Bachman's

**Cake:** A Cinnabon (...long story)

**Photographer:** Brett Dorrian



### JESSALYN & LYS AKERMAN-FRANK

**Date of Wedding:** August 23rd, 2013

**Ceremony:** Raspberry Island, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Reception:** Cinealis Residence

**Florist:** Cana Potter

**Wedding Coordinator:** Donna Bachman

**Wedding Cake and Music:** Chrissy Mills

**Wedding Dinner:** Chrissy Mills and Donna Bachman

**Photography:** Shaun Riffe

**Master of Ceremony:** Aaron Gutzke

**Wedding Officiant:** Blake Gutzke

**Makeup:** Stephanie Ritenour

**ASL Interpreter:** Becky Callahan







## REANNE REED-VIKEN & JODI REED-VIKEN

**Date of Wedding:** September 1, 2013

**Dating Since:** November, 2009

**Ceremony & Reception:** Minneapolis Queen  
Riverboat, Minneapolis

**Florist:** Connie Viken for centerpieces, Flora Bella for  
the corsages

**Wedding Coordinators:** Brides

**Cake:** Angel Food Bakery

**Invitations:** Britt Lundberg of Minneapolis, MN

**Photographer:** [m] brooks photography





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## After the party: How saying “I do” affects your taxes

Hundreds of GLBT couples have tied the knot in Minnesota since our state legalized same-sex marriages on Aug. 1. Many other same-sex Minnesotan couples had previously wed in other states or countries. If you're among those newlyweds—or plan to join them—congratulations!

Having the freedom to marry who we love has far greater significance (and consequence) than financial matters and household budgeting. But, like all married couples, you'll return from your honeymoon to a host of mundane details and responsibilities—including how your marital bliss affects your state (and federal) taxes. The short answer: Just the same as any other married couple in Minnesota.

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the federal government must recognize same-sex marriages and provide the same benefits that other married couples receive. Two months later, the IRS issued a ruling on how to implement the Supreme Court decision at the federal level.

The IRS now recognizes all legal same-sex marriages for tax purposes. This includes couples who now live in states that don't recognize their marriages. Couples who wed before this year can – but don't have to – file an amended federal return as married for previous “open” years (usually the three preceding years).

The IRS ruling paved the way for the Minnesota Department of Revenue to provide information on filing state tax returns. Same-sex married couples will be treated the same as all other married couples in Minnesota. This equality extends to how you file your taxes for 2013 and beyond.

These changes can affect any or all of the calculations on your tax return that relate to your filing status as a married couple. Some examples include:

- If you're married, you must file as “married filing joint” (if you file one return with your spouse) or “married filing separate” (if you each file your own return). You must use the same filing status on your Minnesota and federal returns.
- If you amend your federal tax return for a previous year, you must also amend your Minnesota return for that year, with the same filing status.
- If you take the personal and dependent exemption – or the standard deduction – on your federal return, you must do the same on your state return. If you file separate returns, you must both take the standard deduction or both take itemized deductions.
- If you claim the earned income tax credit or child tax credit, you must use the same filing status and other information as on your state and federal tax returns.

- Employee benefits that you get for, or from, your spouse are treated the same for tax purposes as they would be for any married couple.
- When making contributions to an IRA, you're subject to the same limits as other married couples.

Each couple's tax situation is unique, so you may want to consult a tax professional for advice and instructions on how to file or amend your tax returns.

**What's in a name?** Under the IRS ruling and under Minnesota law, the term “marriage” does not include registered domestic partnerships, civil unions, or other similar formal relationships recognized under state law, whether between same-sex or opposite-sex individuals.

**Other states:** If you live or file an income tax return in another state that doesn't recognize your marriage, you may have to file that state's return as “single” or “head-of-household.” Check that state's laws for more information.

### More Information:

#### Minnesota Department of Revenue

Minnesota Tax Information for Same-Sex Married Couples  
([www.revenue.state.mn.us/businesses/withholding/Documents/09%2005%2013\\_MarriageChart%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/businesses/withholding/Documents/09%2005%2013_MarriageChart%20FINAL.pdf))

#### Same-Sex Marriage Information for Individual Taxpayers

([www.revenue.state.mn.us/individuals/individ\\_income/Pages/SameSex-Marriage.aspx](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/individuals/individ_income/Pages/SameSex-Marriage.aspx))

#### Same-Sex Marriage Information for Employers

([www.revenue.state.mn.us/businesses/withholding/Pages/Same-Sex-Marriage.aspx](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/businesses/withholding/Pages/Same-Sex-Marriage.aspx))

#### Internal Revenue Service

##### IRS FAQs for Same Sex Married Couples

([www.irs.gov/uac/Answers-to-Frequently-Asked-Questions-for-Same-Sex-Married-Couples](http://www.irs.gov/uac/Answers-to-Frequently-Asked-Questions-for-Same-Sex-Married-Couples))

##### IRS FAQs for Registered Domestic Partners and Individuals in Civil Union

([www.irs.gov/uac/Answers-to-Frequently-Asked-Questions-for-Registered-Domestic-Partners-and-Individuals-in-Civil-Unions](http://www.irs.gov/uac/Answers-to-Frequently-Asked-Questions-for-Registered-Domestic-Partners-and-Individuals-in-Civil-Unions)) □

The Minnesota Department of Revenue provided information for this article. Find more at [www.revenue.state.mn.us](http://www.revenue.state.mn.us)





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# Fifteen Years Married: A Chat with the Fladmarks



Jerry and Travis Fladmark have been married for 15 years. We chatted with them about their marriage and marriage equality.

**Justin: How long have you been together? In what year did you marry?**

**Jerry & Travis:** We met in April 1995, started dating in September 1995, and were engaged on Jerry's 40th birthday – April 21st, 1996. We had a rather large wedding (160 guests) on Valentine's Day in 1998 at the First Unitarian Society in Minneapolis. We had to wait for more than 10 years to get legally married in the United States – in San Francisco, CA on August 26, 2008.

**J: Tell me about the proposal.**

**J&T:** Jerry said for years before we met that he was going to marry the man sitting across the table from him on his 40th birthday. He kept his word. He got down on one knee at the Table of Contents restaurant in Minneapolis between the entrée and the dessert.

**J: When you announced your marriage, how did your families take the news?**

**J&T:** Overwhelmingly excited for us. There were a few people that were less than excited, but we didn't experience any outright rejection. It was very new to folks in 1996. In fact, when we put our engagement photo in the Star Tribune, it caused a big stir – a same-sex engagement announcement had never been done before. We were called by radio stations for interviews. Conversely, we were not able to put our anniversary photo and announcement in the Star Tribune 10 years later.

**J: You've been married for 15 years. What's your secret? What's the recipe for longevity in a relationship?**

**J&T:** Just two words: "Yes Dear." Just kidding... the secret is simple – honesty and communication.

**J: Is there something more than love to consider before**

**getting married?**

**J&T:** Where you are at personally in life. You have to be able to love yourself before you can really love someone else.

**J: Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your marriage?**

**J&T:** We were discriminated against when Trav changed jobs. Because of DOMA, we were unable to keep Jerry insured through COBRA. Since he has diabetes and high blood pressure, we were nervous that he would be excluded under a pre-existing condition clause. We were also discriminated against on our taxes, paying higher taxes on income and healthcare when our marriage wasn't recognized.

**J: What did it mean for you when the Minnesota State Legislature legalized same-sex marriage?**

**J&T:** It meant more than almost anything in our lives. To finally have the "official" stamp of approval and equal recognition was so heartwarming and endearing. Of course, the our more practical side was thrilled with the money we would save in taxes and healthcare costs. We now feel fully a part of our community and more secure as we face life's inevitable uncertainties.

**J: Any advice for planning a wedding?**

**J&T:** Keep it within your budget or save money first. Financial issues are one of the biggest issues that seem to come up for couples. There's no sense starting your marriage in debt from a wedding. Other than that have fun with it and make it all about your love for one another. It is your day! We discussed the wedding day with our close friends and really let them take over big parts of the day. So, we could relax and be present in the moment.

*Another secret to longevity? They've never raised their voices in an argument, though Jerry's hearing does require it on other matters... □*





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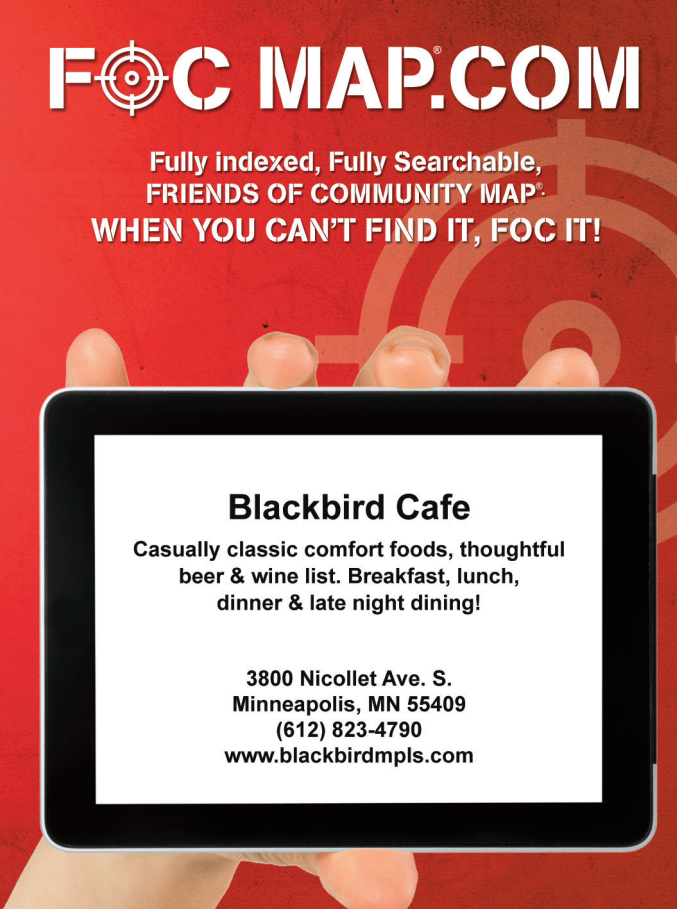
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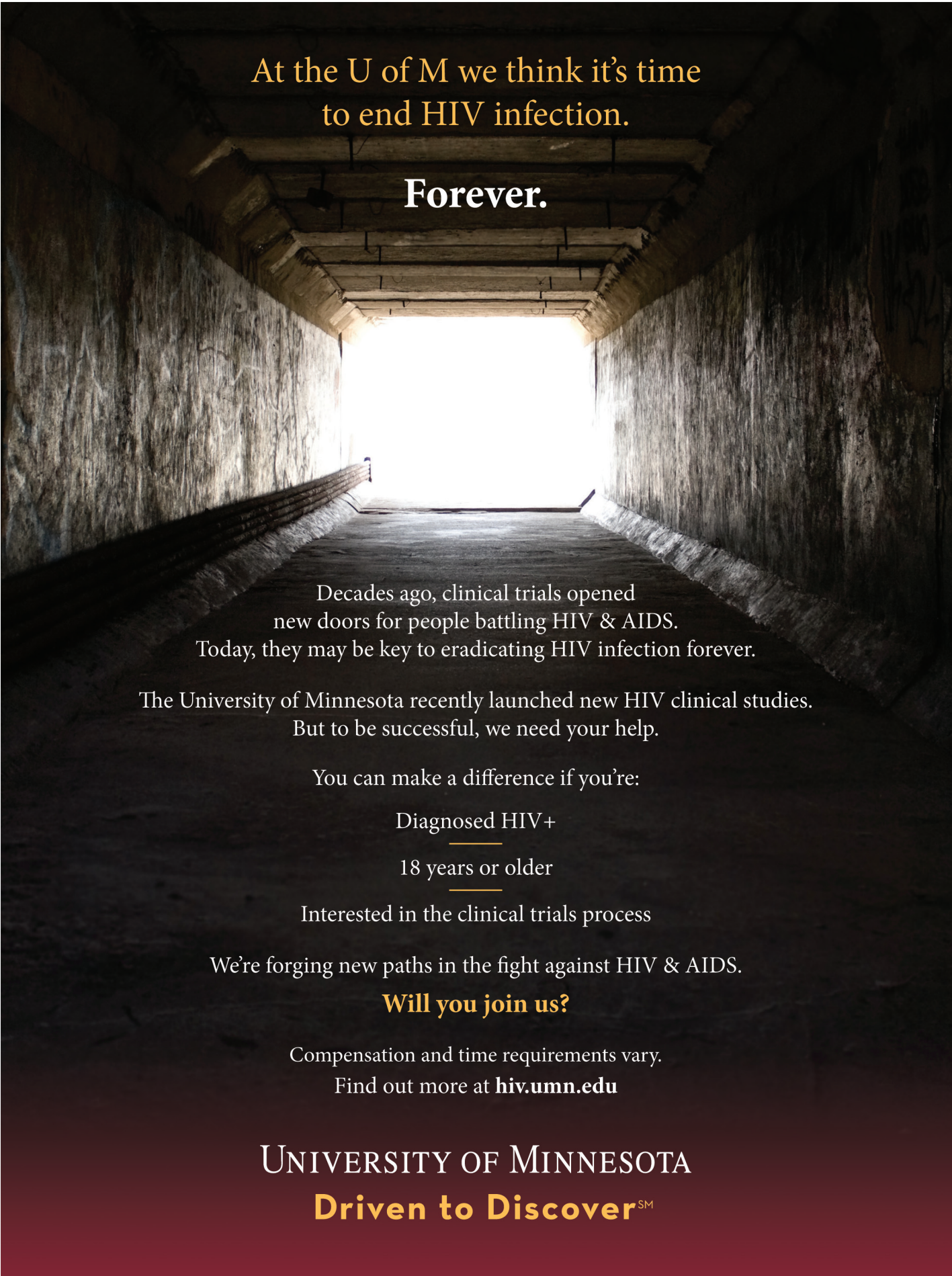
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